**MALAWI AFRICA RISING \_ 24 NOVEMBER 2014 TEAM MEETING**

**Country Lodge, Area 9, Lilongwe**

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**OVERVIEW**

* Dr Regis Chikowo explained the rationale for the monthly meetings –principally to update each other and create a coordinated approach to research and framer engagement in our action sites. We aim to meet these objectives through short presentations by team members at these meetings that may alternate with day long field trips to experimental sites
* It was observed that this will be a great opportunity for graduate students to get feedback and inputs on their work from colleagues, thereby refining the research process
* Dr Chikowo also briefed members on the need fully follow through our more integrated theme-based proposal as opposed to the previous work-package approach

**ARUSHA PRESENTATION**

Dr Chikowo shared with members the presentation he made in Arusha, Tanzania, during the Africa RISING annual planning meeting, emphasising the research to impact trajectory. This would be achieved through functional partnerships with NGOs and extension services implementing related activities in both Dedza and Ntcheu districts. The ultimate aim is to have measurable hunger and poverty reduction in the action sites when compared with counterfactual (clean) sites of similar baseline conditions.

**2014-2016 RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

Dr Chikowo indicated that the team has developed a proposal to IITA for the 2014/15 period, which essentially shows the implementation path through September 2016. The team is guaranteed funding for the 2014/15 and so all members should continue with activities. The team need to demonstrate how the different technologies are being used by farmers, and what research outputs are being generated to refine these technologies for improved system functioning. As part of the M&E system, the team has to continue monitoring the Feed the Future indicators.

Concerns were raised, including the too high pitched expectations of the Africa RISING program in relation to the level of funding. It was generally agreed that we have to be innovative and, where possible, link closely with other activities funeded from differet sources, while taking care to keep the Africa RISING identity.

**BRIEF PROGRESS REPORTS**

**ICRAF**

ICRAF conducted a field visit to monitor nursery establishment. They found out that sowing was in progress but some farmers experienced poor germination of the seeds. Most farmers complained that the seeds the received had weevils which affected the germination rate.The individual nurseries are managed well compared to the group nursery. This has created ownership hence well raised seedlings. There is also poor participation of some farmers who were expecting to receive dairy cows. This was a problem created by local leadership, that we are working on resolving through the farmer group committees.

**CIAT/ ICRAF: Proposed maize-grain Legume intercropping**

CIAT conducted a field visit to identify, sensitize and interact with farmers who will host mother and baby trials. Two farmers to host mother trials were identified as well as 20 baby farmers in Mkuwazi. Both mother and baby trial host farmers will be trained on protocols. Baby sites will be visited (later this week)to confirm land suitability.

ICRAF/CIAT visited Linthipe and Kandeu to provide feedback to stakeholders on the 2013/2014 research work, mobilize farmers, and prepare for the 2014/2015 season. ICRAF participated in mobilizing farmers in Linthipe. In total, CIAT formed 12 mother and 197 baby trials making of 209 trials whereas ICRAF formed two mother and 20 bab trials.

Farmers liked the promising bean varieties introduced in the sites as shown by increased numbers of participants in the year 2014/2015. During the discussion of last year’s results farmers confirmed supremacy of the newly introduced beans through increased yields compared to the current existing varieties. A more focused approach to the trials was needed to achieve good results in 2014/15 season as the number of mother trials had increased from five to twelve with involvement of more farmers.

**LUANAR**

LIVESTOCK

They have conducted a baseline survey in Dedza and Ntcheu. Problems noted included poor nutrition, poor housing and lack of improved pasture seeds. Goat farmers have been trained on goat diseases and disease control. Drugboxes have been distributed as well. Planned activities include follow up on drug box progress, data collection on goat growth performance and weights, training on goat feed formulation and feeding, collection of feed samples before and after on- set of rainy season, feed analysis – laboratory work, training on goat housing, conducting field days and supervisory visits on various field activities.

NUTRITION

Focusing on the nutritional part of the project, the core objective is to increase consumption. Farmers are trained on how to store partially processed legumes. This is being implemented by using Trials of Improved Practices (TIPs) approach and training. The challenge is that the project missed the critical harvesting period of March to July by then farmers had already sold most of their legume. The team will investigate this component during the 2014/15 season

AGRONOMY

P fertilization has shown improvements in doubled-up systems (pigeon peas plus soya) as well as in pure stands of soya. However, the site in Golomoti does not show consistent results, reasons of which might be the higher P-status of the soil in Golomoti and soil moisture content seems to play a crucial role regarding P-uptake. This year the graduate student will be looking at the residual effects of the systems on maize production.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

There was a presentation of “Merged Malawi FTF Indicators”. Every 6 month the report has to be submitted the next being December. In case of report updates the report there is need to inform Dr. Regis Chikowo as well as copy it to our local M&E officer (Emma in ICRAF).

**NEXT MEETING**

There was an agreement for a joint field trip to assess early crop development for one site which should take place in the third week of January. December is a busy time for planting and so a formal team meeting will be skipped.

**ATTENDANCE**

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| **Name** | **Institution** |
| Isaac Nyoka | ICRAF |
| Wezzi Mhango | LUANAR |
| Emmanuel Jambo | Africa RISING Research Assistant |
| Edward Mzumara | LUANAR |
| Emma Gausi | ICRAF |
| Bartholomew Chataika | CIAT |
| Lloyd Phiphira | IITA –N2Africa |
| Charles Mkhutche | LUANAR |
| SofletMwafulirwa | LUANAR |
| Aston Mulwafu | ICRAF |
| TheaMi Weiss | Intern Student with us (Prof J. Six student- Switzerland (not in photo) |
| Regis Chikowo | MSU/IITA |